



## CITY OF DURHAM | NORTH CAROLINA

**Date:** September 16, 2014

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager

**Through:** Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager

**From:** Kevin Dick, Director, Office of Economic and Workforce Development

**Subject:** Acceptance of the Donation of a Sculpture from Liberty Arts

### Executive Summary

This item recommends that the City Council accept a donation by Liberty Arts, Inc. of a sculpture for installation on City property. The item also recommends that the City Council hear a brief presentation about the sculpture design, at the scheduled Work Session.

### Recommendation

The Office of Economic and Workforce Development recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with Liberty Arts, Inc. to accept ownership by the City of a sculpture to be installed in Parrish Street Plaza, or at such alternate location as the City staff might deem appropriate, subject to final approval of the installation of the sculpture in conformance with city requirements.

### Background

On November 21, 2011 the City Council approved a Resolution Establishing a Public Art Policy, to establish a public art process for the City of Durham, including the process for the donation of works of art to the City of Durham. As stated in that resolution, "...a public art program is important to a city, because it brings social, cultural, educational and economic benefits to the public and visitors to the city..."

On January 6, 2014 the City entered into a contract with Liberty Arts, Inc. to provide funding for the first Bull City Sculpture Show, a national juried outdoor sculpture exhibit juried by Durham architect Phillip Freelon. Under the terms of the agreement, Liberty Arts committed to offer a purchase price for one of the sculptures from the show to be purchased by Liberty Arts to remain in Durham on public display. While not required to do so by the terms of the contract, Liberty Arts offered to donate the selected sculpture to the City of Durham. An advisory committee appointed with the advice of the Cultural Advisory Board's Public Art Committee recommended to Liberty Arts the selection of *Winding Out*, a weathered cedar and steel sculpture by Ashville, N.C. artist Robert Winkler. The board of directors of Liberty Arts accepted the recommendation and offered the piece to the City. At its meeting on June 10, 2014, the Public Art Committee recommended that the City accept ownership of the piece, to be placed in a location to be determined by the City staff. The General Services Department, in cooperation with

the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, have recommended the Parrish Street Plaza as the preferred location.

The work is an abstract sculpture, in the form of a spiral, 119" by 162" by 102" and valued at \$18,000.00. It is constructed of cedar slats attached with steel bolts around a central steel rod. The location, near the intersection of Parrish Street and Mangum Street is near two other ornamental wooden structures and will require similar maintenance to those items on a similar schedule. The General Services Department has reviewed the installation and maintenance issues with the artist. The General Services Department will be responsible for the installation, with technical advising provided by the artist and Liberty Arts. *Winding Out* is currently on display in Central Park, as part of the Bull City Sculpture Show.

Robert Winkler studied at the Cleveland Institute of Art, the Art Institute of Boston, the School of Visual Arts in New York and at Ohio State University. His works have been displayed on a permanent or temporary basis in locations that include New York; Chattanooga; Plano, Texas; Dalton, Georgia; Charleston, S.C. and several North Carolina cities including Charlotte, Salisbury, Asheville, Highlands and Durham, where another of his outdoor sculptures is in the collection of Duke University's Beber Sculpture Garden.

### **Issues and Analysis**

A major priority of the City of Durham is increasing and strengthening the economic stability of the City. Studies have demonstrated that arts spending contributes to economic activity and local government revenues, encouraging visitorship and associated spending. Public art adds to the appearance of neighborhoods and promotes a sense of place. Staff endorses the acceptance of the donation and the recommended location, which would serve to promote the continued revitalization and vitality of downtown Durham. It recommends that the acceptance of the piece not be linked to the specific proposed location so as to allow for the relocation of the piece if technical matters or other uses for the location require its move to an alternate site.

The encouragement of public art is a stated goal of the Downtown Master Plan, Citywide Strategic Plan and Durham Comprehensive Plan.

### **Alternatives**

The City Council may reject the recommendation to accept ownership of the work. Not approving the acceptance would eliminate the opportunity for the City to own a significant work by a respected North Carolina artist.

### **Financial Impact**

Approval of the donation will have no impact on the General Fund, other than the costs of adding occasional maintenance, as outlined in the agreement, to the General Services Department's maintenance schedule.

### **SDBE**

An SDBE summary is inapplicable because no project-specific goals have been set and no SDBEs are involved in this item.